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ABSTRACT

To determine how journalists at two metropolitan newspapers view good writing and writing coaches, questionnaires were distributed to all full-time newsroom personnel (including journalists and editors) involved in preparation of news at two large dailies under the same ownership in the same city, in July, 1986. The total number of respondents was 125, half responding from the morning paper, and half from the evening paper (an overall response rate of 66%). The papers did not employ internal writing coaches but on occasion brought in an outside coach. Findings indicated that many journalists at both newspapers felt their papers had a strong commitment to good writing. Most of the respondents said their writing had been praised, if infrequently. However, journalists perceived little evidence of rewriting or willingness to experiment with writing at their papers. The major contributors to good writing in the newsroom were seen as experienced/motivated reporters and good editor-reporter rapport. One-half of the reporters said editors are more likely to hurt writing than to help it. Newsroom procedures and deadline pressures were identified as the greatest obstacles to good writing. The vast majority of journalists felt that a writing coach could make a more in favor of coaches than were their colleagues on the morning paper, and reporters were more supportive of the idea than were editors. (Twenty-nine notes and six tables of data are attached.) (ARH)

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Newspaper Division:
"Instruction and Incentives in Writing"

HOW JOURNALISTS AT TWO NEWSPAPERS VIEW GOOD WRITING AND WRITING COACHES

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HOW JOURNALISTS AT TWO NEWSPAPERS VIEW GOOD WRITING AND WRITING COACHES

Traditionally, good writing "has been relegated to newspapers' broom closets, on the top shelf, next to the rolls of toilet paper."[1] But as newspaper circulation lagged behind population growth in the mid-1970s, editors began focusing on writing as a way to compete with television. Today newspapers across the country are sponsoring writing seminars, hiring writing coaches, placing a new emphasis on writing.

This study sought to examine journalists' attitudes toward good writing and writing coaches and the human and procedural factors in the newsroom that affect those attitudes. The likelihood that support for writing coaches is perceived differently by journalists with different attitudes and backgrounds was explored. The research also looked at the functions that journalists prefer coaches to fulfill.

Little empirical research has been done on writing quality in the newsroom.[2] Much of what has been written appears in print media trade publications.

A recent report by the Associated Press Managing Editors writing and editing committee evaluated what newspapers are doing about quality. Response from 160 editors indicated that 38 percent have started writing-improvement programs.[3] Other

research shows that reporters and editors are generally in close agreement on the importance of the various writing skills in news writing and feature writing and appear to regard news writing and feature writing as similar tasks.[4]

Achieving good writing in the newsroom requires genuine commitment on the part of newspaper executives and hands-on editors. The Poynter Institute's Roy Peter Clark says an environment must be created where good writing is valued and rewarded.[5] This involves sensitivity to a wide range of attitudes and assumptions relating to how copy is written and edited.[6] But too often writers face obstacles in the newsroom including lack of time, space and support from editors.[7]

Although collaboration should characterize the relationship between reporter and editor,[8] lack of discussion between reporters and editors is perceived to be the leading problem in the newsroom.[9] "On most newspapers," according to one observer, "either the writer or the desk gets the upper hand and the winner henceforth struggles to keep the loser in a position of subservience."[10]

Writing coaches have had an impact[11] as editors have begun to recognize the need for coaches in today's newsrooms.[12] Improving writing quality is "the rightful province" of editors at all levels, but time and organizational pressures often restrict their effectiveness.[13] Writing coaches fill the void and help strengthen the skills of young reporters and also assist

older journalists who know the mechanics of good writing but too often settle for "bromides and dull sentences."[14]

A study that focused on the techniques used by writing coaches found one-on-one discussions of writing problems to be most effective. The coaches felt other methods -- such as seminars, workshops and newsletters -- supplemented working individually with reporters.[15] One coach uses a big-screen television linked to a computer to teach writing workshops.[16]

A 1987 national study found coaches believed that reporters' most serious writing problems were failure to adequately organize and conceptualize their stories, procrastination and failure to rewrite. Coaches also felt that writing improvement programs benefited good writers more than average or poor writers, and that one person could significantly improve writing.[17]

Experimental research suggests that writing prowess depends heavily on the psychological state of the writer. News writing performance might be improved by hiring journalists with high creative aptitudes and by providing adequate time intervals for them to rest between writing tasks.[18] Intensity of task dissatisfaction is seen as a mediating factor in successful writing.[19] Subjects working under induced stress were found to make more writing errors and to produce less readable writing than those operating under low stress conditions.[20]

Because so little work has been done on journalists' attitudes about writing and coaches, exploratory research questions were developed. The research questions which guided the analysis were:

1) What are journalists' attitudes toward good writing and writing coaches?

2) What human and procedural factors affect journalists' attitudes toward good writing and writing coaches?

3) If journalists' attitudes toward writing coaches are favorable, what roles do they prefer coaches to perform?

4) Are writing coaches perceived differently by journalists with different attitudes and backgrounds?

Method

This study was conceived during one author's stint as a researcher and writing coach for two metropolitan newspapers. He thought the findings might help writing coaches to evaluate and market themselves.

Questionnaires were distributed to journalists at Newspapers A and B during the first week of July 1986. Completed questionnaires were mailed to the investigators by the first week of August. Nine open-ended questions were coded; the co-efficient of inter-rater reliability was .93.[1]

One hundred-four journalists at Newspaper A were eligible for the survey, and 62 took part, a 60% completion rate. Sixty-three of 85 eligible journalists at Newspaper B participated, a 74% completion rate. The total was 125 respondents for an overall completion rate of 66%. Half of

those responding were from the morning paper, A, and half were from the evening paper, B.

Respondents were all full-time newsroom personnel -- reporters, editors, copy editors and columnists -- involved in preparation of news. They worked for two large dailies[22] under the same ownership in the same city. The papers did not employ internal writing coaches but on occasion brought in an outside coach.

Journalists in this survey are a population, not a sample. Therefore, statistical analysis, which assumes randomly sampled data, is not appropriate. Statistical analysis, however, can be legitimately applied to determine if there are actual differences among subgroups. For this purpose, statistical tests were used in this study.[23]

Findings

The majority of those responding were reporters, which had the effect of over representing their perspective. All but eight of the editors represented in the survey held management-level positions (excluding copy editors). Length of employment was similar at both papers, with about one-third being relative newcomers to the newspapers and another third being long-time employees.

In comparison with the national average,[24] journalists at Newspapers A and B were slightly more likely to be male and somewhat more likely to be older and better educated.

They were also more likely to be reporters, to have more media experience and to have worked longer at their papers.

Attitudes toward writing

Nearly one-half of the journalists gave their newspapers high marks on good writing (four or five points on a five-point scale). Less than one-fourth rated writing emphasis as low. Editors were more likely than reporters to state that good writing was held in high regard. This sentiment was also stronger at the afternoon paper than at the morning paper.

About six journalists in 10, however, reported little rewriting by reporters at their papers (ratings of one or two on a five-point scale). Journalists at Newspaper B perceived more rewriting activity than did those at the morning paper.

In general, one-half of the journalists perceived little willingness to experiment with writing at their newspapers. But one-third did sense support for writing experimentation. Editors were more likely than reporters to think experimentation was supported.

Most respondents said their writing had been praised, but very few said their work had been complimented often. Journalists receiving praise (usually reporters) most often obtained it from managing editors and reporters.

Respondents claimed that the major contributors to good writing in the newsroom were experienced/motivated reporters and good editor-reporter rapport. Credited next most often were editorial skills, sufficient time for writing,

management emphasis on improving writing and reporters' willingness to innovate. Reporters and editors each stressed their respective contributions.

Reporters received the highest ratings for contributions to good writing among both editors and reporters, especially among reporters. Respondents rated themselves next most highly. Younger journalists were somewhat more critical of themselves than were older journalists of themselves.

Only about one-third of the respondents gave line editors or supervising editors high marks for their contributions to good writing. Less than one-fourth gave highest scores to copy editors. These responses varied somewhat by newspaper; however, reporters were more critical of editors than were editors of themselves.

One-half of the reporters agreed that "the editors hurt prose more than help it." Only about 12% of the editors concurred. This finding was among the strongest signs of a gulf in attitudes between editors and reporters.

Although reporters were often critical of editors, they were not usually sensitive to editors' anxieties. For example, 41% of editors agreed that "the work load and demands placed on me are often too heavy." Only 28% of the reporters agreed with this statement. Overall, one-third of those at both papers felt overworked.

The greatest obstacle to improved writing mentioned by Newspaper A journalists was newsroom procedures. Deadline

pressures and space or format limitations were cited next most often followed by copy editors and supervising editors, particulary city editors. Overall, at both papers, reporters were more critical than were editors about newsroom procedures and space/format limitations. Editors were more likely than reporters to be concerned about deadlines.

Journalists at Newspaper B, with its tighter deadlines typical of afternoon dailies, were twice as likely as their colleagues at Newspaper A to perceive negative effects of deadline pressure on their work. Sloppiness, decreased accuracy and diminished creativity were among their greatest concerns. One journalist in five at the papers reported deadline pressure was a positive influence, citing increased productivity or sharpened writing focus.

Support for writing coaches

Three-fourths of the journalists agreed that "a writing coach can be effective in the newsroom." Those at Newspaper B were more supportive than those at Newspaper A (Table 1). About eight in 10 reporters agreed, compared with six in 10 editors. Differences in attitudes were related to differences in demographic characteristics and journalistic background.

Journalists most supportive of writing coaches were disproportionately highly educated, female and under 45 years old. Those hired by the papers during the 1970s were notably more in favor of writing coaches than those hired earlier or later. The less well-informed that reporters said they felt

about newsroom decisions and policies, the more likely they were to think that writing coaches could be effective.

When answers were grouped by management or non-management status (all editing positions except copy editing were classified as management level), differences between the two newspapers emerged (Table 2). Non-management support for writing coaches was equally high at both newspapers, but management support was much higher at Newspaper B. About half of the newsroom managers at Newspaper A considered writing coaches to be effective, while nearly three-fourths of the managers at Newspaper B thought this.

Compared to managers at Newspaper B, those at Newspaper A tended to be less well-educated, to have worked at their paper longer and were more likely to expect to leave there within another five years (Table 3). This was exhibited in lower job satisfaction among managers at Newspaper A than at Newspaper B. Although managers at A were about equally likely to be aged 45 years old or older, a larger proportion of those at B were aged 55 years old or older. A larger proportion at B were also between the ages of 35 and 44.

Among managers, journalism was about equally represented as a college major at both papers. Those at A, however, were more likely to have studied humanities and those at B to have pursued social science.

Non-management journalists at Newspaper B tended to be more educated, younger, more recently employed and somewhat

happier in their jobs than their colleagues at Newspaper A (Table 1). Their backgrounds were somewhat more likely to have included humanities than social science. Reporters at both papers were about twice as likely as management-level editors to have been English majors.

Differences in college majors were related to age. Older journalists (over 45) and younger journalists (under 35) were more likely than those aged 35 to 44 to have studied journalism. The 35-44 age group had more humanities majors. Younger journalists were slightly more likely to have pursued English than were older journalists. Those aged 35 or older tended more than others to have social science backgrounds.

Although a majority of former journalism majors were supportive of writing coaches, they were less so than those who had studied English or other fields. A majority of those who had studied journalism and were supportive were younger.

Age was the best predictor of views about writing coaches (Table 3). The older the journalists, the less likely they were to believe in writing coaches' contributions.

High ratings for reporters' contributions to good writing were overwhelmingly related to belief in writing coaches' effectiveness (Table 4). Low ratings for supervising editors' contributions to good writing were only marginally related to belief in writing coaches' effectiveness.

Greater support for writing coaches also was associated with perceptions of limited dialogue between editors and

reporters, as well as with high expectations of supervisory leadership which largely were not met.

Journalists holding positive views of writing coaches tended to indicate that editors do not spend enough time with their best writers and, especially, their less experienced writers. They also maintained that editors fail to see the importance of their teaching role (Table 5). They disagreed that the copy desk is "recognized as an integral part of the editing process." These respondents tended to be younger and to have lower job satisfaction.

Three-fourths of the respondents who thought writing coaches could be effective in newsrooms saw the greatest benefits coming from feedback such as critiques and one-on-one counseling (Table 6). Nearly 40% mentioned seminars and teaching sessions, and about 20% preferred coaches making suggestions to editors or serving as independent liaisons between editors and reporters. Editors tended to stress teaching functions of writing coaches, and reporters tended to stress editorial advising and liaison roles.

Discussion and Conclusions

Many journalists at Newspapers A and B felt their papers had a strong commitment to good writing. Those at the afternoon daily were more inclined to believe so.

Most of the respondents said their writing had been praised, if infrequently. But they perceived little evidence

of rewriting or willingness to experiment with writing at their papers.

The major contributors to good writing in the newsroom were seen as experienced/motivated reporters and good editor-reporter rapport. High ratings for reporters' contributions to good writing were overwhelmingly related to belief in writing coaches' effectiveness. Relatively few respondents saw editors as making significant contributions to good writing. This can be explained in part by the fact that reporters outnumbered editors in the study by two to one.

One-half of the reporters said editors are more likely to hurt writing than to help it. In their frequent criticism of editors, reporters did not appear to recognize editors' problems. Many more editors than reporters complained of heavy work loads, which can lead to job dissatisfaction and presumably can adversely affect editing performance.[25]

Newsroom procedures and deadline pressures were identified as the greatest obstacles to good writing. News writing would benefit from deadline arrangements that allow more time for rewriting and enough time on the city and copy desks to consider stories without rushing them through. Editors and reporters working under stress are prone to make more mistakes and to produce less readable copy than their less harried colleagues.[26] Performance might be improved by providing rest periods for journalists between assignments.[27]

The vast majority of journalists felt a writing coach

can make a contribution in the newsroom. Similar to other recent research,[26] coaches were found to be most effective in one-on-one discussions of writing problems.

Journalists at Newspaper B were more in favor of coaches than their colleagues on the morning paper, and reporters were more supportive than were editors. Those most supportive of writing coaches were likely to be highly educated women under 45 years old and people seeing themselves as poorly informed about newsroom decisions and policies.

These respondents' contentions that editors spend too little time with their best writers and their less experienced writers and that editors do not appreciate their teaching role could guide future research on the effects these factors might have on writing in the newsroom.

Differences in values and attitudes between editors and reporters at Newspapers A and B were due in part to different job orientations but were also largely symptomatic of pronounced generational divisions. Age and status distinctions also help explain the lack of communication between the papers' editors and reporters. This insufficient dialogue is often seen as the leading problem in newsrooms across the country.[27] How newsroom dialogue can be improved and how to bridge age and job status differences between reporters and editors remain questions for future inquiry.

If permitted to act independently, a writing coach might be especially valuable as a liaison between editors and

reporters having trouble communicating with each other. In the process, the coach might help them come to better understand one another. The findings suggest that editors may care about writing and reporters' problems but may be too burdened by their own work demands to address reporters' needs effectively.

This study examined how journalists at two newspapers view good writing and writing coaches. Future research should develop a representative national sample to discover whether differences among newspapers contribute to journalists' perceptions of good writing and writing coaches.

Nonetheless, the study provides some new insights on important factors affecting news writing performance. It may be useful to journalists and others interested in good writing and the acceptance and effectiveness of writing coaches. Recognition of age divisions might be of particular value to writing coaches in developing strategies to counter older editors' resistance to the writing coach concept.

NOTES

1. Loren Ghiglione, ed., Improving Newswriting (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors Foundation, 1982), p. 3.

2. Much research focusing on news writing has involved readability studies. Some recent examples include Harry Stapler, "The One-Sentence/Long-Sentence Habit of Writing Leads and How It Hurts Readership," Newspaper Research Journal, 7:17-27 (Fall 1985); Ron F. Smith, "How Consistently Do Readability Tests Measure the Difficulty of Newswriting?" Newspaper Research Journal, 5:1-8 (Summer 1984); Gilbert L. Fowler Jr. and Edward J. Smith, "Readability of Newspapers and Magazines Over Time," Newspaper Research Journal, 1:3-8 (November 1979).

3. "Continuing Study Report: Writing and Editing Committee," The APME Red Book 1984 (New York: Associated Press, 1985), p. 206.

4. N. Jean Farkas, "A Survey of Editors' and Reporters' Attitudes Concerning Various Aspects of Writing (unpublished master's thesis, West Virginia University, 1985).

5. "Can You Teach Good Writing?" The Bulletin, 615:7 (May 1978).

6. Anthony Ripley, "6 Ways to Improve Writing," The Bulletin, 617:12 (September 1978).

7. Everett S. Allen, "The Role of Creative Writing," The Bulletin, 625:3 (July/August 1979).

8. Roy Peter Clark, "Plotting the First Graph," Washington Journalism Review, 4:50 (October 1982).

9. Ray Laakaniemi, "An Analysis of Writing Coach Programs on American Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 64:573 (Summer-Autumn 1987).

10. Alan Richman, "How One Overseer of Writing is Tackling His New Job," The Bulletin, 641:9 (April 1981).

11. David Shaw, "Smoothing Out the First Rough Draft of History," Washington Journalism Review, 3:28-34 (December 1981).

12. Terri Petramala, "Hey Coach! Time-Out for Writing," Byline, 11:9-11 (Winter 1985).

13. Jack D. Hunter, "Good Writing Is . . . ," The Bulletin, 657:5 (February 1983);

14. M.L. Stein, "Coaches Help Reporters Strengthen Verbal Skills," Editor & Publisher, Nov. 7, 1981, p. 15.

15. Rita Wolf and Tommy Thomason, "Writing Coaches: Their Strategies for Improving Writing," Newspaper Research Journal, 7:43-49 (Spring 1986); see also Ray Laakaniemi, "Letter from the Coach," Newspaper Research Journal, 8:53-58 (Spring 1987).

16. Howard Shatz, "Show 'Em, Don't Tell 'Em," Editor & Publisher, Jan. 12, 1985, pp. 12, 16.

17. Laakaniemi, "An Analysis of Writing Coach Programs on American Daily Newspapers," op. cit.

18. Mervin D. Lynch and Dan Kays, "Effects on Journalistic Performance of Creativity and Task Dispersion," Journalism Quarterly, 44:508-512 (Autumn 1967).

19. M.J. Goodman, "A Study of College Journalism Student Attitudes" (unpublished master's thesis, University of Georgia, 1971).

20. Bradley S. Greenberg and Percy Tannenbaum, "Communicator Performance Under Cognitive Stress," Journalism Quarterly, 39:169-178 (Spring 1962).

21. The formula was: $\frac{2(C_1 + C_2 \text{ agreement})}{C_1 + C_2}$

22. Newspapers having more than 100,000 circulation are defined as "large" by Editor & Publisher Yearbook and by Philip Meyer, Editors, Publishers and Newspaper Ethics: A Report to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (Washington, D.C.: ASNE Newspaper Center, 1983).

23. See: Robert F. Winch and Donald T. Campbell, "Proof? No. Evidence? Yes. The Significance of Tests of Significance," The American Sociologist, 4:140-143 (1969).

24. See Associated Press Managing Editors Association, Journalists and Readers: Bridging the Credibility Gap. Conducted by MORI Research (San Bernadino, CA: The Sun, 1985).

25. Goodman, op. cit.

26. Greenberg and Tannenbaum, op. cit.

27. Lynch and Kays, op. cit.

28. Wolf and Thomason, op. cit.

29. Laakaniemi, "An Analysis of Writing Coach Programs on American Daily Newspapers," op. cit.

TABLE 1.

Characteristics Related to Attitudes Toward Writing Coaches.

QUESTION: Do you think that a writing coach can be effective in the newsroom?

	Yes (N=89)[a]
TOTAL	75%
EMPLOYED BY:	
Newspaper A	69
Newspaper B	80
JOB TITLE	
Editor	63
Reporter	81*
EDUCATION	
Some college	64
College degree	71
Graduate work	83
COLLEGE MAJOR	
Journalism	70
English	81
Other	77
SEX	
Female	84
Male	72
AGE	
18-34	84
35-44	82
45 or older	56**
TIME SPENT IN JOURNALISM	
5 years or less	75
6-10 years	89
11-20 years	84
21 years or more	52**
YEAR BEGAN WORK AT NEWSPAPER	
1980-1986	77
1970-1979	91
Before 1970	51***
FEELING INFORMED ABOUT NEWSROOM DECISIONS AND POLICIES	
Feel well-informed	55
Feel somewhat well-informed	74
Do not feel well-informed	86*

[a] N =119 with 6 observations missing. Chi-square tests for differences between proportions answering "yes" and "no" significant at: *.05 **.01 ***.001

TABLE 2.

Comparison of Management Status and Newspaper on Attitudes Toward Writing Coaches.

QUESTION: Do you think that a writing coach can be effective in the newsroom?

	Yes (N=89)[a]
TOTAL	75%
Management	61
Non-management	82*
NEWSPAPER A	
Management	52
Non-management	81*
NEWSPAPER B	
Management	73
Non-management	82

[a]N =119 with 6 observations missing. Chi-square tests for differences between proportions answering "yes" and "no" significant at: *.05

TABLE 3

Differences in Management Characteristics at the Two Newspapers.

	NEWSPAPER A		NEWSPAPER B		
	Management (N=21)	Non-Management (N=40)	Management (N=17)	Non-Management (N=46)	TOTAL (N=125)
EDUCATION					
Some college	24%	10%	0%	7%	10%
College degree	33	56	59	46	49
Graduate work	43	33	41	48	41
COLLEGE MAJOR					
Journalism	43	37	47	38	40
English	19	32	18	38	30
Humanities	29	5	6	16	13
Social science	5	11	24	2	8
Other	4	15	5	6	9[a]
SEX					
Female	19	31	18	30	27
Male	81	69	82	70	73
AGE					
18-24	0	3	0	4	2
25-34	19	34	12	46	33
35-44	33	37	41	28	34
45-54	29	11	18	17	17
55 or older	19	16	29	4	14[a]
TIME SPENT IN JOURNALISM					
5 years or less	0	18	0	20	13
6-10 years	14	25	6	28	22
11-20 years	33	33	47	35	35
21 years or more	52	25	47	17**	30
YEAR BEGAN WORK AT NEWSPAPER					
1980-1986	24	33	18	41	32
1970-1979	14	43	41	37	36
Before 1970	62	25*	41	22	32
PLANS FOR FIVE YEARS IN FUTURE:					
Hope to be at same newspaper	57	30	88	37	46
Prefer to be somewhere else	10	30	0	33	23
Don't know	29	38	12	30	30
Expect to be retired	5	3	0	0	2[a]

[a]Chi-square test not computed because more than 20% of cells have 5 respondents or fewer.

Chi-square tests for differences between proportions answering "yes" and "no" significant at:
*.05 **.01

TABLE 4.

Evaluations of Reporters, Editors and Supervisors

	JOURNALISTS' AGE			THINK WRITING COACH CAN BE EFFECTIVE?		
	18-34 (N=43)	35-44 (N=41)	45/Older (N=38)	Yes (N=89)	No (N=30)	TOTAL (N=125)
Please rate reporters on their contributions to good writing in the newsroom.						
Very high (4-5 on 5-point scale)	74	76	69	80	59	74
Medium (3)	21	24	23	17	31	22
Very low (1-2)	5	0	9	2	10	4*
Please rate supervising editors on their contributions to good writing in the newsroom.						
Very high (4-5 on 5-point scale)	24	37	30	30	33	30
Medium (3)	36	24	51	38	33	37
Very low (1-2)	40	39	19	32	33	33
How much dialogue would you say there is between editors and reporters?						
A great deal (4-5 on a 5-pt. scale)	21	20	45	25	37	28
Moderate amount (score 3)	40	45	39	39	47	40
Not much (score 1-2)	40	35	16*	36	17	31
How much leadership do you expect from your supervisors?						
A great deal (score 4-5 5-pt. scale)	67	55	59	67	47	60
Moderate amount (score 3)	26	38	30	28	37	32
Not much (score 1-2)	7	8	11	6	17	8
How much leadership do you feel that you get from your supervisors?						
A great deal (score 4-5 5-pt. scale)	9	7	38	17	20	17
Moderate amount (score 3)	35	44	35	35	43	39
Not much (score 1-2)	56	49	27**	48	37	44

Chi-square tests for differences between proportions answering "yes" and "no" significant at:
*.05 **.01

TABLE 5.

Working Conditions and Editorial Roles

AGREE/DISAGREE:	JOURNALISTS' AGE 18-34 (N=43)	35-44 (N=41)	45/Older (N=38)	THINK WRITING COACH CAN BE EFFECTIVE? Yes (N=89)	No (N=30)	TOTAL (N=125)
There is enough time at my newspaper to consider stories on the city desk and copy-desks instead of just rushing them through.						
Agree (1-2 on 5-point scale)	31%	22%	45%	25%	57%	32%
Feel neutral (3)	19	12	24	19	20	19
Disagree (4-5)	50	66	32*	56	23	48**
Editors understand the importance of their teaching role at my newspaper.						
Agree (1-2 on 5-point scale)	19	22	37	20	33	26
Feel neutral (3)	12	12	11	10	17	11
Disagree (4-5)	70	66	53	70	50	63
The copydesk at my newspaper is recognized as an integral part of the editing process.						
Agree (1-2 on 5-point scale)	33	49	50	35	67	44
Feel neutral (3)	12	17	16	16	10	15
Disagree (4-5)	56	34	34	49	23	41**
The editors spend enough time with their best writers.						
Agree (1-2 on 5-point scale)	7	22	26	16	23	18
Feel neutral (3)	44	22	42	33	43	35
Disagree (4-5)	49	56	32*	52	33	46
The editors spend enough time with the less experienced writers.						
Agree (1-2 on 5-point scale)	7	5	26	9	17	13
Feel neutral (3)	35	24	37	28	37	31
Disagree (4-5)	58	71	37**	63	47	56
All things considered, how satisfied are you with your present job?						
Very satisfied	14	24	34	26	21	25
Fairly satisfied	50	49	50	43	66	49
Somewhat/very satisfied (combined)	36	26	16	31	13	25

Chi-square tests for differences between proportions answering "yes" and "no" significant at:
*.05 **.01

TABLE 6

Perceived Functions of a Writing Coach.[a]

QUESTION: If you think that a writing coach can be effective in the newsroom, how do you think a writing coach can be most effective?

	NEWSPAPER		JOB TITLE		
	Newspaper A (N = 31)	Newspaper B (N = 46)	Reporter (N = 52)	Editor (N = 22)	TOTAL (N = 77)
Feedback, critique, one-on-one counseling, advice	81	74	77	77	77
Seminars, teaching writing skills	26	46	29	59	38
Make suggestions to editors/copy desk	10	19	12	5	9
Be unbiased liaison between editors and reporters	16	4	12	5	9
Other	2	1	6	--	4

[a]Chi-square test not computed because more than 20% of cells have 5 respondents or fewer.